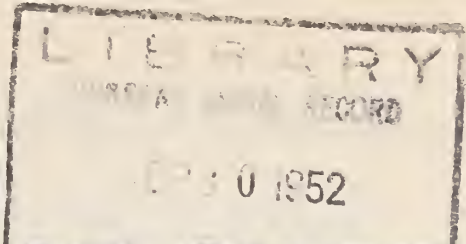


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Farm Mobilization **FACT SHEET**

Grassland Farming Means More Livestock Feed

If American consumers continue to demand more and more livestock products, the nation's farmers must produce more and more feed for our increasing livestock population. At present, feed grain supplies are below desirable levels and the acreage adapted to feed grain production is limited. If we are to have more livestock, more emphasis must be placed on grass and legume production to meet increased feed requirements. Increased emphasis on grasses and legumes is desirable, not only to supply carbohydrates and proteins needed by cattle and sheep, but it is essential to conserve and improve the soil.

Much of our grassland not being cropped is producing low quality and low yields of grass. If it were made to produce high-quality grasses and legumes, both the quantity and quality of forage produced would be improved. Vigorous stands of improved grasses and legumes will increase the feed supply, improve soil structure, increase the soil's water-holding capacity and fertility, and make possible the effective use of larger quantities of commercial fertilizer.

A major objective of the Grassland Goals Program sponsored by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, the Land-Grant Colleges, and other cooperating agencies, is to get more land seeded to improved grasses and legumes. Many services are available to assist farmers and ranchers in this program, particularly in technical phases of grass and legume production and use. Financial assistance is also available for grassland practices through the Agricultural Conservation program.

This fact sheet contains information for State and County Agricultural Mobilization Committees and others in getting the Grassland Program under way. It suggests practices and ways in which agencies can best cooperate with farmers and ranchers in the program.

THE GRASSLAND PROGRAM

Because the Grassland Program is adapted to local organization and action, State Agricultural Mobilization Committees are being asked to select certain pasture and hay land practices that might be established in their respective States. County Mobilization Committees have been asked to select from the State list those practices considered best for their county and proceed to set goals for these practices. Suggestions for land which should grow cover and soil-building crops are included in Farm Mobilization Fact Sheet Number 14, "PLANT COVER CROPS TO PROTECT LAND--INCREASE PRODUCTIVITY."

SUGGESTED PRACTICES FOR VARIOUS TYPES OF LAND

Pastures and Hay Lands Other Than Range Lands--Following are some suggested practices for increasing production and soil and water conservation from grasses and legumes:

- Grow high-yielding, high quality, sod-forming grasses and legumes in rotation to provide maximum yields of all crops grown in the rotation.
- Renovate and seed to recommended grasses and legumes low-producing pastures and hay lands and idle or semi-idle lands.
- Apply phosphate fertilizer, complete fertilizer, or manure at recommended rates to nutrient-deficient hay and pasture lands. Apply agricultural lime where needed to correct acidity and to supply calcium and magnesium.
- Control weeds and brush.
- Rotate animals so that grasses and legumes will be consumed when most nutritious. Avoid over grazing of pastures.
- Grow winter grains, winter legumes, or mixtures for grazing, especially in the South, to increase year-round feed supplies.
- Grow sudan grass or other annual, fast-growing grasses for summer reinforcement of other pastures.
- Irrigate meadows and pastures, where possible, to increase yields and quality and to provide a more uniform forage supply during summer months.
- Control destructive insects to obtain high yields and better quality forage.

Range Land Practices--There may be many local variations in the definitions of the terms "range" and "pasture" lands so local judgment should be used in planning the program. Here are some suggested range land practices:

- Control competitive or poisonous plants by cutting, plowing, burning, poisoning, or by other means to improve the land for range use.
- Seed perennial forage grasses on depleted range areas for soil protection and to restore or increase forage production.
- Rotate the use of two or more areas of a range in regular order, with definite resting periods in between.
- Practice deferred grazing to assure a seed supply for natural reseeding, increase the vigor of old plants, and improve forage stands.
- Furrow, chisel, or pit "short-grass" ranges to reduce plant competition, retard runoff, increase water intake, and increase the stand of range forage.

- Plant to adapted grasses plowed land not suitable for cultivated crops.
- Increase the harvest of native seed for reseeding range lands.
- Construct dikes and terraces to divert, hold back, and use water from occasional heavy rains and melting snow for irrigation to insure increased grass production.
- Construct dams, pits, ponds, and wells, and make use of springs to provide water for livestock and extend grazing on range land.
- Build permanent fences to control livestock, improve the distribution of grazing, and permit deferred and rotation use.
- Remove flammable materials from fire lanes or border areas to lessen danger from fire and to stop the spread of fires on range land.

TO IMPROVE QUALITY AND USE OF GRASSLAND CROPS

- Produce more nutritious forage.--Hay with a high proportion of leaves to stems and low fiber content is more easily digested and has a higher feed and energy value. Protein, vitamin, and mineral content are best when the crop is harvested at the correct stage of growth.
- Improve harvesting and storing methods.--To save all the nutrients possible there should be adequate machinery and facilities to handle the crop as hay or silage. Hay should not be allowed to lie in the sun and rain. It should be put up when dry enough to store well, and handled carefully to avoid shattering and loss of leaves.
- Utilize forage efficiently.--Feed high-quality roughage to animals that can use it most efficiently. Feed high quality and low quality roughage together, and hay and silage together to get the most use out of these feeds. Feed concentrate feeds particularly protein, vitamins, and minerals along with roughage. Extend the pasture season wherever possible through a well-balanced pasture program.
- Provide ample pasture and harvested forage for dairy and beef cattle, sheep, swine, and poultry at all times.

SEED AND FERTILIZER SUPPLIES ADEQUATE

Meadow and pasture grass seed supplies in general are expected to be adequate to meet demands for the coming fall and spring plantings. Based on carry-over supplies and indications of 1952 production, ladino, red, and sweetclovers, brome grass, tall fescues, orchard grass, timothy, and sudan grass seem to be in best supply. In moderate supply, but sufficient to permit wider use are alfalfa, birdsfoot trefoil, Southern white clover (Louisiana and Mississippi), and crested wheatgrass. Although native range grass seed is not in good supply, certain varieties may be available locally. Such grasses as bluestem, bluegrass, lovegrass, and tall stiffhair, intermediate, and crested wheatgrasses may be used for range plantings where they are adapted to local conditions.

Nitrogen fertilizer supplies are increasing and will probably continue to increase through 1955 when 2,185,000 tons of nitrogen are expected to be available. This compares with 1,418,000 tons available for 1952 crops, and an expected supply of one and one-half million tons for 1953.

Supplies of superphosphate fertilizer probably will not be materially different from the 2,230,000 tons available this year. Potash supplies are increasing steadily and are expected to equal 1,750,000 tons of K₂O for the 1953 crop compared to 1,515,000 tons this year. Supplies of limestone will be adequate to provide for increasing needs on pasture and hay land.

INFORMING THE PUBLIC OF THE GRASSLAND PROGRAM

State and County Agricultural Mobilization Committees can do much to increase the effectiveness of the Grassland Program. State and County committees are being asked to prepare Grassland Handbooks for their respective areas. These handbooks should be available to technicians, farmers, ranchers, and others.

The usual methods of informing the public should be used in connection with the Grassland Goals Program. In many counties where local grassland programs are already under way, the interest and aid of business and civic groups have been enlisted with good results.

Information necessary for the successful establishment of the Grassland Program is available from State Agricultural Experiment Stations which conduct research on grassland farming. The cooperative State Agricultural Extension Services which carry on the educational program for farmers and other agricultural agencies have a big part in providing information to farmers and in establishing the Grassland Program. Local representatives of USDA agencies can also supply additional information as well as technical assistance to the individual farmer in selecting and applying the best practices.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Write to the Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C., for free copies of the following publications:

Crested Wheatgrass, L-104--8 pages.

The Ryegrasses, L-196--8 pages.

Sudan Grass, F-1126--23 pages.

Kudzu, FB 1840--30 pages.

Irrigated Pastures, FB 1973--30 pages.

Sericea, FB 2033--29 pages.

Grasses and Legumes for Soil Conservation in the Pacific Northwest, M 678--56 pages.

Using Tall Fescue in Soil Conservation, Leaflet 254--8 pages.

Legumes in Soil Conservation Practices, Leaflet 163--8 pages.

Write to State film libraries, usually located at land-grant colleges, for the following movies:

Grass and Cattle, 2 reels, (16 mm.) sound, color, 15 minutes.

Rebuilding With Grass, 2 reels, (16 mm.) sound, color or black and white, 20 minutes.